

# In search of lost time and the attunement of jealousy

Ferguson, Rex

DOI:

[10.1353/phl.2017.0031](https://doi.org/10.1353/phl.2017.0031)

License:

None: All rights reserved

*Document Version*

Peer reviewed version

*Citation for published version (Harvard):*

Ferguson, R 2017, 'In search of lost time and the attunement of jealousy', *Philosophy and Literature*, vol. 41, no. 1A, pp. 213-232. <https://doi.org/10.1353/phl.2017.0031>

[Link to publication on Research at Birmingham portal](#)

**Publisher Rights Statement:**

Final Version of Record Published as above in *Philosophy and Literature*

Validated March 2016

**General rights**

Unless a licence is specified above, all rights (including copyright and moral rights) in this document are retained by the authors and/or the copyright holders. The express permission of the copyright holder must be obtained for any use of this material other than for purposes permitted by law.

- Users may freely distribute the URL that is used to identify this publication.
- Users may download and/or print one copy of the publication from the University of Birmingham research portal for the purpose of private study or non-commercial research.
- User may use extracts from the document in line with the concept of 'fair dealing' under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (?)
- Users may not further distribute the material nor use it for the purposes of commercial gain.

Where a licence is displayed above, please note the terms and conditions of the licence govern your use of this document.

When citing, please reference the published version.

**Take down policy**

While the University of Birmingham exercises care and attention in making items available there are rare occasions when an item has been uploaded in error or has been deemed to be commercially or otherwise sensitive.

If you believe that this is the case for this document, please contact [UBIRA@lists.bham.ac.uk](mailto:UBIRA@lists.bham.ac.uk) providing details and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate.

## ***In Search of Lost Time* and the Attunement of Jealousy**

**Rex Ferguson – University of Birmingham, UK**

### **Abstract**

The theme of jealousy is well known to readers of Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, and its epistemological function has been dissected by critics such as Girard, Hillis Miller and Bowie. This article builds on the insights of these theorists but from the altered perspective of Heideggerian philosophy. Heidegger provocatively argues that Western philosophy has concerned itself with epistemology at the expense of ontology – the function of jealousy will be considered in these terms. That is to say, rather than operating as an epistemological tool, Proustian jealousy is a 'mood' which discloses being.

### **Introduction**

Proust reminds us many times, in the pages of *In Search of Lost Time*, that there is no such thing as a singular or unchanging self.<sup>1</sup> When viewing the novel as a whole this point is most evident in the journey of Marcel, the narrator, who has to become a myriad of Marcells before he reaches the library of the Guermantes and the discovery of what he must write about. But, in a more intimate reading of the novel's many *vignettes* the theme is also prevalent. Swann, for instance, cannot understand the torment he has gone through for a woman who wasn't his type precisely because he has ceased to be the Swann who desired Odette. The newfound subjectivity he inhabits at the end of *Swann in Love*, rather, takes him back to an 'intermittent caddishness' in which he can reflect on women as just so many sexual objects – the 'type' that he refers to equating to a value judgement commensurate with his preferred choice of cigars (I, 460). Swann's 'caddishness', here, fails to

recognise that the idea of consistent ‘types’ (as objects of desire) only make sense if the subject of desire remains unchanged over time.

On the other hand, and there is always another hand with Proust, the compulsion exhibited by the novel’s characters to act out identical relationships over long periods of time indicates that ‘types’ exist in some other way. Specifically, Proust’s narration suggests that, when it comes to erotic encounters, the type of the jealous lover is omnipresent. Swann, Marcel, Saint-Loup, Charlus and Gilberte all, at different stages in the novel, become the type of the jealous lover. When jealous these personalities are more like one another than like their previous or later selves. In his obsession, the jealous Swann, for instance, bears more resemblance to the jealous Marcel than he does to the cad who appears at the end of *Swann in Love*. This uniting of character via the emotion (or what will later be characterized as mood) of jealousy is mirrored by the constant unification of jealousy and love throughout the novel. No one, in Proust’s universe, seems capable of loving without jealousy.

The importance of jealousy within the novel has been noted by many. Most notably, for the purposes of this essay, the criticism of René Girard, Malcolm Bowie, J. Hillis Miller and Joshua Landy has brought the epistemological value of jealousy – its focus upon knowing – to the forefront of investigation. This essay seeks to build on the insights of these theorists from the altered perspective of Heideggerian philosophy.<sup>2</sup> Heidegger provocatively argues in *Being and Time* that the history of Western philosophy has concerned itself with epistemology at the expense of ontology – the function of jealousy will be considered in these terms. That is to say, rather than operating as an epistemological tool, Proustian jealousy is more fundamentally thought of as a ‘mood’ which discloses Being: it is an example of the ‘attunement’ inherent in the basic occurrence of *Dasein*. Crucially, the Being that is disclosed via jealousy is what Heidegger would refer to as a Being-with-others or a ‘worldhood’ in which Otherness is authentically encountered. This is particularly

significant in Proust's novel as Marcel's experience up until then has been peculiarly solipsistic – a feature that will be explicated in the first half of the essay.

### **Mock-Reality**

While Proust's novel beautifully illustrates the theme of multiple selves referred to above partly by the sheer proliferation of characters and storylines developed, it is also true to say that the novel is governed by the singular consciousness of Marcel. Or, perhaps to be more accurate, the writing at any one time is governed by the consciousness Marcel inhabits at that point. The intensity of detail provided in the *Swann in Love* volume overtly draws attention to this feature of the narration. There is no way that Marcel could reasonably be expected to have amassed all the subtly refined information he would have needed to if this were truly Swann's history. The narration, rather, relates a fictional construction of Marcel: at one stage he writes of 'a sheet on which I had jotted down a *story* about Swann and his inability to do without Odette' (V, 418, my emphasis).<sup>3</sup> Swann's story is, in effect, *created* by Marcel as he recounts it. As such, Vladimir Nabokov's observation that 'Swann is a kind of fancy mirror of the narrator himself. Swann sets the pattern, and the narrator follows it' should be reversed.<sup>4</sup> That is, while it initially appears that Swann sets the jealous template from which Marcel draws, it is in fact Swann whose representation is derived from the experience of jealousy over Albertine already suffered by Marcel prior to his beginning to write the novel.

The inherent Marcel-ness of Swann in this sense limits his autonomy – as a projection of Marcel he is never truly Other to the narrator. This should come as no surprise to most readers of Proust, though, as Marcel continually emphasises the position of idealistic solipsism which he takes up. Early in the novel he states that 'even the simple act which we describe as "seeing someone we know"' is to some extent an intellectual process' later claiming that 'it is the tragedy of other people that they are merely showcases for the very perishable collections of one's own mind' (I, 20 & V,

637). This inability of other people to truly exist is made apparent through the complete refusal of Marcel's family to entertain the notion of Swann's exalted social status – preferring, rather, to persist with the view of him already established during his visits to the house in Combray. Yet it is not merely acquaintances that are subsumed by the viewing ego in this way. When returning from the visit to his uncle's in which he meets Odette ('the lady in pink') Marcel is surprised by his parent's reaction of disapproval:

I imagined, like everyone else, that the brains of other people were lifeless and submissive receptacles with no power of specific reaction to anything that might be introduced into them: and I had not the least doubt that when I deposited in the minds of my parents the news of the acquaintance I had made at my uncle's I should at the same time transmit to them the kindly judgement I myself had based on the introduction (I, 93).

While such a moment undeniably jolts Marcel into accepting the independence of his parents, it is very quickly overridden by the dominant view which this quotation expresses: namely, that other people's minds are 'lifeless and submissive' vessels in which Marcel can 'deposit' ideas. It is, in fact, the tacit acceptance of this view which colours so much that is distinctive about Marcel's narration. For example, the most bizarre and unique events, thoughts and emotions are, when encountered by Marcel, taken to be universal and experienced in identical fashion by everyone: a view that is surely connected to the 'pseudo-iterative' quality of the narration identified by Gérard Genette.<sup>5</sup> It also serves as one version of a more general sense in which the exterior world is perceived as subservient to the interior consciousness. Swann's Marcel-ness is thus matched by the Marcel-ness of the external world itself. As much is evident from Paul De Man's analysis of Marcel's decision to stay indoors and read on a bright summer's day, thereby possessing the "total spectacle of summer"

including the attractions of direct physical action [...] much more effectively than if he had been actually present in an outside world that he then could only have known by bits and pieces.<sup>6</sup> Here, we find the external world denigrated for its fragmentary nature and direct experience eschewed in favour of intimate, solitary, reflection. Importantly, what Marcel achieves with this activity is the ‘possession’ of summer: the sun, the breeze, the scenery are all his to own.

While this possession may be more complete it is also essentially isolating. The individual, in being elevated to a point of such importance, is cut off from the external world in significant ways. The image of Proust himself, so difficult to erase whenever a discussion of his novel ensues, comes to mind here: the image of an individual whose experience of the world while writing *In Search of Lost Time* was limited to that which could be encountered from within the confines of his cork-lined bedroom on Boulevard Haussman. Yet one of the most curious things about Marcel’s radical subjectivism, and perhaps why its pronounced solipsism is often underplayed, is the way in which it also takes tremendous consideration over what it takes to be the views of others. A classic example of this sense comes with Marcel’s anticipation of seeing the great actress, Berma, perform. Desire, in this instance and to utilise the terminology of René Girard, is filtered through the conduit of Bergotte as mediator. It is Swann’s report that ‘there’s not a man on the stage whom he (Bergotte) thinks equal to Berma’ that initially sets Marcel’s expectations racing (I, 115). Yet when the moment of seeing her in Racine’s *Phedre* eventually arrives the experience is a crushing disappointment. Marcel reports that: ‘all my pleasure had ceased; in vain did I strain towards Berma’s eyes, ears, mind, so as not to let one morsel escape me of the reasons she would give me for admiring her, I did not succeed in gleaning a single one’ (II, 22).

While his great expectations have been dashed by the performance itself, in retrospect it is able to attain a renewed vitality. This begins almost immediately as the shared activity of applauding adds a lustre to Berma’s performance, Marcel noting that, ‘the more I applauded, the better, it

seemed to me, did Berma act' (II, 24). The value which others evidently find in Berma's acting is then later reinforced by a conversation with Marcel's father's friend, Norpois, in which the actress is again valorized. By this point her rehabilitation in Marcel's mind is complete and he recalls the performance in glowing terms. The mediating of his desire, initially through Bergotte and latterly via Norpois, thus nullifies his own impressions entirely. As Girard puts it, in Proust 'not only does the Other and only the Other set desire in motion, but his testimony easily overcomes actual experience when the latter contradicts it.'<sup>7</sup>

As Girard also points out, though, the mediation apparent in Proust's universe is often more of a collective phenomenon than that encountered in his other examples of Cervantes, Stendhal and Dostoyevsky. By this rationale, the interests of the Verdurin salon are mediated by their relationship with what is perceived to be the higher echelons of the Guermantes circle. Marcel's snobbishness and what Gilles Deleuze termed his apprenticeship through the first stage of Proustian signs ('worldliness') are clear examples of how this collectivisation of desire, interest and meaning occurs.<sup>8</sup> But there is something paradoxical at play here, for the more Marcel is enmeshed in a world in which value is created by a sense of what others think, the more those others appear to be subsumed within the governing consciousness of Marcel's singular narration: Bergotte and Norpois are as Marcelled as Swann.. His everyday life thus appears to function in a remarkably similar way to Heidegger's description of inauthentic *Dasein*. Specifically, Heidegger's interpretation of the normally dominant presence of the 'they' (*das man*), as explicated in *Being and Time*, contains the following comments:

This Being-with-one-another dissolves one's own *Dasein* completely into the kind of Being of 'the Others', in such a way, indeed, that the Others, as distinguishable and explicit, vanish more and more. In this inconspicuousness and unascertainability, the real dictatorship of the

‘they’ is unfolded. We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as *they* [*man*] take pleasure; we read, see, and judge about literature and art as *they* see and judge; likewise we shrink back from the ‘great mass’ as *they* shrink back; we find ‘shocking’ what *they* find shocking. The ‘they’, which is nothing definite, and which all are, though not as the sum, prescribes the kind of Being of everydayness.<sup>9</sup>

For Heidegger, the ‘Being of everydayness’ is essentially inauthentic and one of the features of such inauthenticity appears to be the combination of Otherness and solipsism so vividly brought to life by Proust. For both Heidegger and Proust, it is precisely in a submission to the ‘they’, or a ‘falling’ into the public self, that the Being of Others dissolves. Clearly, the ‘they’ does not exist other than as a conduit, a mediator, for particular actions and behaviours – and so it thereby functions in precisely the same fashion as Girard’s collective mimetic desire. The difference between Girard and Heidegger, though, is that whereas Girard sees mimetic desire as the motivator of all our social relations, Heidegger views submission to the ‘they’ as an inauthenticity which can, and should, be overcome. To realise the true condition of *Dasein* is, in this sense, a project: as Stephen Mulhall puts it, ‘authenticity is always an achievement.’<sup>10</sup>

One route towards an appreciation of true, individual, Otherness, could be the experience of being in love – is this not the moment when another individual is ultimately accepted as they are and on their own terms? Certainly, the Proustian version of falling in love involves a degree of individuation. For instance, when Marcel first encounters Albertine she is just one member of the little band of girls on the promenade at Balbec: ‘I saw a pallid oval, black eyes, green eyes, emerge, I did not know if these were the same that had already charmed me a moment ago, I could not relate them to any one girl whom I had set apart from the rest and identified’ (II, 428). It is as part of this group or ‘band’ that Albertine initially becomes attractive to Marcel and it is in the gradual



movement towards separating, identifying and then individuating the girls into preferences that she emerges. As this process of what Stendhal would term 'crystallisation' takes place, Albertine comes into being as the beloved object.<sup>11</sup> But the very moment that Marcel declares, 'I knew now that I was in love with Albertine' he also comments that, 'since the days of the games with Gilberte in the Champs-Élysée [...] the declaration of my passion to her whom I loved no longer seemed to be one of the vital and necessary stages of love, nor love itself an external reality, but simply a subjective pleasure. And I felt that Albertine would do what was necessary to sustain that pleasure all the more readily if she did not know that I was experiencing it' (II, 584). In the following paragraph, having left Albertine and returned to his hotel room, he appears to gain as much pleasure from the thought of her as of being in her physical presence. It is therefore precisely the subsuming of the beloved into the interior world of the ego that generates love. The implications of this are significant and can be traced through the similarities exhibited, and recognised by Marcel himself, in all his romantic relationships – he repeats encounters that, at times, seem to recall the withheld mother's kiss with which the whole novel opens. As Leo Bersani forcefully argues, 'the experience of love [...] reinforces his (Marcel's) doubts about the possibility of authentically knowing what is different from the self.'<sup>12</sup>

The encounter with love is therefore the very opposite of one with radical Otherness and in fact forms the zenith of Marcel's solipsism. He reads this into other's relationships too, seeing it as explicatory of the initially inexplicable attractions formed by his friends and acquaintances. For example, his valuation of Rachel (which he bases literally on the value she was deemed to warrant when he met her in a brothel) is at odds with Saint-Loup's not because his friend recognizes something in Rachel that Marcel does not but because the object of desire is essentially arbitrary. He comments that 'the anxiety, the torment, the love of Saint-Loup had been concentrated in such a way as to make, out of what was for me a mechanical toy, the cause of endless suffering, the very

object and reward of existence' (III, 177). Rachel, here, is a toy or doll, a specimen as lifeless as the brains of Marcel's parents – she is blank matter to be made into something valuable by those who see her. Marcel claims to realise, at this moment, 'how much a human imagination can put behind a little scrap of face, such as this woman's was': a notion that is reinforced later in the novel when he recognizes Saint-Loup's incredulity in the face of Marcel's attraction to Albertine (III, 177).

A further scene which emphasises the negligible importance of the object of desire comes in the closing pages of *The Fugitive*, when Marcel entertains erotic thoughts about a woman who is misrecognized and misnamed. Once he determines that the apparently exotic Mlle d'Eporcheville is, in fact, his childhood love, Gilberte, his desire disappears (like Swann with Odette, he is no longer the Marcel who desired this particular object). Prior to this, though, and when reflecting on his desire for the unknown woman he writes that 'certain philosophers assert that the external world does not exist, and that it is within ourselves that we develop our lives. However that may be, love, even in its humblest beginnings, is a striking example of how little reality means to us. Had I been obliged to draw from memory a portrait of Mlle d'Eporcheville, to furnish a description of her, or even to recognise her in the street, I should have found it impossible' (V, 647). The beloved, here, is again not required. Marcel could not draw a portrait of Mlle d'Eporcheville that would bear resemblance to her in any referential sense. But, importantly, he doesn't need to do so: he is sustained by a more private, intimate and independent image. As Bersani puts it, 'desire in Proust works to reduce the world to a reflection of the desiring subject.'<sup>13</sup>

What is so radically questioned by Proust's narrative, and particularly his depiction of love, is the experiential basis of Western philosophy and, by extension, realist fiction. Realism, in this analysis, refers to experience in the sense that its fictions mimic the act of reconstructing prior, concrete, events taking place in an external world of brute reality.<sup>14</sup> But, as Giorgio Agamben writes: 'the most peremptory objection against the modern concept of experience has been raised in the

work of Proust. For the object of the *Recherche* is not a lived experience but, quite the contrary, something which has been neither lived nor experienced.<sup>15</sup> One of the implications of this feature, in terms of the narration, is noted by Deleuze when he argues that Marcel 'is a very bizarre narrator. Totally bizarre. How is he presented? he has no organs, he can't see, he does not understand anything, he does not observe anything, he knows nothing; when something is shown to him, he looks but does not see it.'<sup>16</sup> In a novel which appears so devoted to the observation of others, Deleuze's comment only makes sense once combined with Agamben's. Marcel sees all the time – but rarely is that vision of something wholly Other. He inhabits what Samuel Beckett described as a 'mock reality of experience [that] never can and never will reveal – the real.'<sup>17</sup> But if not real experience then what? Or, if not an experience of reality now, then when?

### **Authentic *Dasein***

What follows closely on the heels of love, in almost all cases within Proust's novel, is jealousy. Quite apart from this simply being noted by numerous critics, its precise configuration within the novel has been utilised in the service of very particular theories. The jealous lover's sense of competition with a supposed rival is thus the perfect material for Girard to advance his theory of mimetic desire, while Deleuze sees jealousy as 'the very delirium of signs' during his charting of Marcel's apprenticeship of various worlds of signification (*PS*, p. 122). That these interpretations focus upon the subjective experience and interpretive potential of jealousy is no accident. Marcel comments at one point that 'if in the course of this work I have had and shall have many occasions to show how jealousy intensifies love, it is from the lover's point of view that I write', thus emphasising both the internal 'intensification' of jealousy and the directedness of its focus (V, 213). As such, the function of jealousy in the novel is as much about what it leads one toward as about what it makes one feel.

Malcolm Bowie has perhaps written with the most acuity on precisely this combination, as he argues that what, ultimately, ‘the jealous lover hears, and heeds [is] an imperious call to *know*.’<sup>18</sup>

In the most obvious sense, the knowledge required is whether the beloved is faithful, and what Bowie’s analysis illuminates is the way in which Marcel’s narration, infused by jealous feeling, takes on the shape of other epistemological endeavours. Bowie argues that Marcel:

Envisages himself in turn as chemist, philologist, pathologist, cryptanalyst, logician, biologist, physiologist, ornithologist, ichthyologist, astronomer, grammarian, philosophical analyst both deductive and inductive, historian, psychologist of perception, physicist, botanist, mathematician and meteorologist. He discusses certain of Albertine’s pronouncements with the seriousness and the hope of a biblical exegete, or with the psychoanalyst’s cunning ear for lapses and omissions (*FPL*, p. 50).

For Bowie, the straining after these ‘real facts’ and the methodologies employed by Marcel, constitute him as a subject determined upon knowledge of the objective world. And in utilising the variety of techniques outlined by Bowie, Marcel ‘wants to get behind appearances to the real structure of things’ (*FPL*, p. 50). Yet while Bowie’s interest in the pursuit of knowledge and its significance for Proust’s rhetorical strategies is undeniably a subject of rich interpretation it doesn’t quite tell the full story. For there is something more fundamental at play in Marcel’s jealousy than its role in the formation of knowledge: namely, his Being. In other words, jealousy needs to be considered in terms of ontology rather than epistemology.

Of course, this fundamental distinction is the one with which Heidegger reads the history of Western philosophy. For Heidegger, philosophy from Plato onwards, has concerned itself with giving an account of substance and, importantly, its underlying, real, essence. The series of dualities

that this has given rise to – with the most central being that between mind and matter – has led to an overpowering theorisation of existence that has then been taken to be the natural position in which our lives are lived.<sup>19</sup> In Heidegger's interpretation this is simply a mistake. Life is not lived in a world of objects that are present-at-hand in this manner and, crucially, to return, via rational philosophizing, to the basic, primordial position in which existence is really experienced (in which objects are 'ready-to-hand') has been shown to be a futile endeavour. Heidegger, in effect, wants to reverse the whole process of doing philosophy in such a way that the primordial position of being (or *Dasein*) is taken as the starting point. We should thus 'start out from a description of ourselves as we are in the midst of our day-to-day practical affairs, prior to any split between mind and matter.'<sup>20</sup> Crucially, what the distinction between presence-at-hand and ready-to-hand asserts is not simply that between the passive observer of objects and the engaged, practical, worker with tools. Rather, Heidegger's version of primordial 'worldhood' is one of, as Harrison Hall puts it, 'intentionality and world [...] which precludes any use of the subject-object model and without which the understanding of the other two sorts of intentionality and world are necessarily misunderstandings.'<sup>21</sup>

The phenomenological project of Heidegger, then, is to make our ordinary dealings with things evident to us – but in a way which precludes turning them into the cold lifeless, objects of theoretical speculation. Hall comments that 'the trick is to see what they are without changing them from instrumental to perceptual objects and breaking down the network of relations essential to their instrumental nature' (*IW*, p. 127). This is no easy task and Heidegger appears reluctant to claim that simply thinking about our Being-in-the-World will make its contours completely evident to us. Another project could, at this point, venture into a discussion of the later Heidegger's views on the disclosive potential of art and poetry but, for the moment, our focus must remain on the content of Proust's novel. In other words, rather than contemplating how the form of Proust's writing may

disclose authentic Being to its reader, I want to discuss how Marcel achieves such a state within the novel itself.

The most obvious place to start, here, is with the instance of the madeleine. The instantaneous power of this moment for Marcel, and the subsequent significance of involuntary memory for Proust's aesthetic, is precisely its power to recover some kind of authenticity. Georges Poulet comments that, when tasting the Madeleine, 'from a feeling of existence detached from times and places, the being finds himself brought back by deep remembrance to a first feeling, truly original, constituent of himself and of the world, the act of faith by which the sentient being adheres instantaneously, locally, to sensible reality.'<sup>22</sup> Yet, the form of recapturing a scene from the past that is 'constituent of himself and the world' (a move which mirrors the importance of expectation referred to earlier) serves to obliterate the present moment of the now. In returning to the Combray of his childhood, Marcel is therefore not really in the Paris of his adulthood. A form of authentic Being is thus achieved but surely not the type that Heidegger would have in mind.

More promising is a scene from *Within a Budding Grove* in which Marcel, upon his first visit to Balbec, cannot sleep in his hotel bedroom. Like so much in Proust this seemingly banal experience is laced with significance – for it is precisely the objects of this new bedroom which make sleep impossible. Marcel comments that 'it is our noticing them that puts things in a room, our growing used to them that takes them away again and clears a space for us. Space there was none for me in my bedroom (mine in name only) at Balbec' (II, 282). For Marcel, this encounter with the room is experienced as painful and is contrasted with the comfort in which his own room at home (in which objects have disappeared via their habitual use) is occupied. At Balbec he reports feeling that there could be no possibility of rest: 'I kept raising my eyes – which the things in my room in Paris disturbed me no more than did my eyelids themselves, for they were merely extensions of my organs, an enlargement of myself' (II, 282-3). This view of the way a room is inhabited strikes a

resonant chord with Heidegger's example of the workshop, in which the craftsman's tools disappear. Heidegger writes that 'that with which our everyday dealings proximally dwell is not the tools themselves. On the contrary, that with which we concern ourselves primarily is the work' (*BT*, p. 99). It is the project that is embarked upon which thus shapes our Being-in-the-world behind which objects lay concealed. Marcel's perception of the inner world of the Other as 'lifeless and submissive', examined earlier, is therefore mirrored by the way in which his everyday surroundings disappear within the haze of habituation. Beckett articulates this point with some force when he writes that, for Marcel, 'life is habit. Or rather life is a succession of habits, since the individual is a succession of individuals; the world being a projection of the individual's mind' (*P*, p. 19). As Marcel continually exercises the same habits, the world is projected in an identical way on a daily basis.

Marcel writes of there being no space for him in his room at Balbec but the kind of space that is opened up could be viewed more positively: for Heidegger the word 'clearing' (*Lichtung*) is associated with the divulgence of authentic *Dasein*. As Stephen Mulhall puts it, the 'capacity to encounter entities as the entities they are - in their what-being and their that-being - is what Heidegger invokes when he talks of *Dasein* as the clearing, the being to whom and for whom entities appear as they are' (*HBT*, p. 75). The fact that Marcel's experience within the room at Balbec is painful emphasises the position from which he begins – a position in which the comfort of habit can be equated with the familiarity of everydayness that inauthentically precludes our engagement with authentic *Dasein*. Coming from this point, the intrusion of objects into his consciousness can only be experienced by Marcel as an attack upon the ego's control (and creation) of his surroundings. Importantly, this moment represents an encounter with the world of objects as neither present-at-hand (in the sense of being the theoretical basis from which Western philosophy had traditionally strode forth) nor is it everyday ready-to-hand (in which they disappear behind the project embarked upon) – rather, the room at Balbec represents the subtle withdrawal from everyday *Dasein* to an

authentic *Dasein* in which our Being is genuinely encountered. As Beckett puts it, when Marcel's habits are broken it 'opens a window on the real' (*P*, p. 28).

What limits the capacity of the room at Balbec in this sense is the fact that it remains unfamiliar for only a short time. Just a few pages on from describing his discomfort within it Marcel comments on the amazing capacity of habit 'which was even now setting to work to make me like this unfamiliar lodging, to change the position of the mirror, the shade of the curtains, to stop the clock' (II, 287). And just as being in this room becomes a habit to Marcel, so too, it could be argued, does his jealousy become a habit in the later volumes of the novel – the only difference being that habit does not douse the flames of jealous pain but, on the contrary, makes of them the essential condition of Marcel's existence. Marcel simply *is* jealous for much of the second half of *In Search of Lost Time*: jealous even when Albertine has given him no grounds to be, jealous beyond the point when she has left him, jealous, still, once she has died.

What this omnipresence of jealousy points towards is its status not as a standpoint, thought or even feeling which reacts to specific events but as an all-consuming mood (in the Heideggerian sense of *stimmung*).<sup>23</sup> In this interpretation, what the many hundreds of pages Proust devotes to jealousy provides is a vivid account of how one is, in Heideggerian terms, 'thrown' into a mood – which is to say that *Dasein*'s 'facticity' includes not just the contingencies of historical position (including language and community practices) but also the state of mind without which our existence could not be. As Heidegger writes: 'in a state-of-mind *Dasein* is always brought before itself, and has always found itself, not in the sense of coming across itself by perceiving itself, but in the sense of finding itself in the mood that it has' (*BT*, p. 174). We are always in some kind of mood – one may stop being melancholy but only because an alternative mood (for example joy) has replaced it. What is also significant about mood, though, is the way in which it comes to us. According to Heidegger 'a mood assails us. It comes neither from "outside" nor from "inside", but



arises out of Being-in-the-world, as a way of such Being' (BT, p. 176). Moods are therefore important precisely because they are not within our ultimate control and yet, at the same time, do not belong to a realm of completely exterior 'objects' (HBT, p. 76). When returning to Proust this effect becomes clear. Marcel does not choose to be jealous, does not experience it as a self-inflicted state and is unable to think his way out of it. Rather, it would be accurate to say that Marcel *finds* himself jealous. Yet, at the same time, it is clearly the dark-side of the most intense of inner conditions: that of love.

This combination of supposed inner and outer (precisely what Heidegger wants to collapse) forms an important feature of why, in Heidegger's contention, moods are disclosive. He writes that '*existentially, a state-of-mind implies a disclosive submission to the world, out of which we can encounter something that matters to us*' (BT, p. 177). The same kind of disclosure therefore takes place via mood as was seen to occur in the room at Balbec: indeed, the significance of the room could be said to be its role in inducing a mood of fretfulness or unease. Primarily, the key concept here is 'care'. Moods are intensely subjective (nobody else understands our mood!) but are directed towards something other than ourselves (Marcel, though often for no definitive reason, is always jealous *about* Albertine). As Heidegger puts it 'letting something be encountered is primarily circumspective; it is not just sensing something, or staring at it. It implies circumspective concern, and has the character of becoming affected in some way; we can see this more precisely from the standpoint of state-of-mind. [...]' Dasein's openness to the world is constituted existentially by the attunement of a state-of-mind' (BT, p. 176).

To read Marcel's relationship with Albertine in this light is to suggest that the importance of his jealousy is not what it ultimately reveals about her but the fact that it springs from a mood in which she 'matters' to him. Marcel thus becomes 'attuned' to the world via his jealous mood about Albertine brought about by a state-of-mind in which her actions and thoughts can affect him.

Marcel has moved from a position in which even the mind of his parents were 'lifeless and submissive' to one in which others 'are encountered from out of the *world*, in which concernfully circumspective Dasein essentially dwells' (*BT*, p. 155). It is a move that is prefigured (or, according to my earlier analysis, refigured) by Swann when he sees Odette out by herself 'walking up the Rue Abbattucci, in a cape trimmed with skunk, a Rembrandt hat, and a bunch of violets in her bosom. Swann would be bowled over by this simple sketch because it suddenly made him realise that Odette had an existence that was not wholly subordinated to his own; he longed to know whom she had been seeking to impress by this costume in which he had never seen her' (I, 289). Odette thus springs to life as truly Other, and as one to whom Swann submits his chance for happiness, at the same instant as he jealously considers the existence of a rival.

One way of gauging the importance of jealousy in the sense laid out above is to consider the contrast between the state of mind (or mood) associated with the first stages of love and that of jealousy. Whereas the former satisfied itself with mental images of the beloved while alone the latter is beholden to them. Marcel writes that, after spending an evening with Albertine:

I would return to Balbec only with the first dews of morning, alone this time, but still surrounded with the presence of my beloved, gorged with an inexhaustible provision of kisses. On my table I would find a telegram or a postcard. Albertine again! She had written them at Quetteholme when I had gone off by myself in the car, to tell me that she was thinking of me. I would re-read them as I got into bed. Then, above the curtain, I would glimpse the bright streak of the daylight and would say to myself that we must be in love with one another after all, since we had spent the night in one another's arms. When, next morning, I caught sight of Albertine on the front, I was so afraid of her telling me that she

was not free that day, and could not accede to my request that we should go out together, that I would delay it for as long as possible (IV, 484-5).

Rather than being satisfied by the thought of Albertine, Marcel here reports a desperate quest to retain the quasi-presence 'of my beloved' – the telegram or postcard acting as the fetishized substitute. In the morning, the anxiety of producing that presence again is also importantly couched in terms relating to Albertine's acceding to Marcel's request. In other words, her choice is uncertain and her mind is not the empty vessel in which the idea of spending the day with Marcel can be deposited. Crucially, this description of the importance of Albertine's physical presence to Marcel comes only after his jealousy (initially sparked by Cottard's comments as Albertine and Andrée waltz together) has begun. It is then followed by a period in which Marcel's 'jealousy prevented me from losing sight of Albertine, and, the moment I was able to leave the house, from letting her go anywhere without me' (V, 183). The logical conclusion to this desire for continued presence is played out in *The Captive*, as Albertine is literally held within Marcel's apartment. The constant surveillance and scrupulous interrogation that this allows for emphasises precisely those features of the narrative so convincingly examined by Bowie. Yet, the captivity of Albertine is also more fundamentally connected to the fact that Albertine, as a crystallized vision of Marcel's imagination, will no longer suffice. Jealousy has changed the reliance that Marcel has upon her and, as such, has altered his own engagement with the external world.

## **Conclusion**

While one is never 'thrown' into a moodless state, and all moods appear to be, in Heidegger's thinking, disclosive, there is also no doubt that he sees some moods as more illuminating than others. Heidegger's discussion of states-of-mind therefore concludes with the positing of anxiety as

the *ur*-mood of his ontology: his mood of moods. In similar fashion, the earlier volumes of *In Search of Lost Time* are far from moodless – but the force with which jealousy is brought out in *The Captive* is far in excess of these prior states of mind and therefore elevates it in terms of signification. To conclude this essay I want to examine whether there is a deeper connection between these moods. That is to say, is there a corollary between anxiety and jealousy?

At first glance there appears to be an obvious answer to this: namely, that jealousy is a form of anxiety. What is jealousy other than the anxious feeling of suspected betrayal? Yet what is key to Heidegger's interpretation of anxiety is its apparently non-referential status. As Heidegger writes, 'that in the face of which one is anxious is completely indefinite' (*BT*, p. 231). The interplay between subject and object – and the encountering of authentic *Dasein* that is thus formed – therefore seems curiously least obvious with anxiety. When we are anxious, it is in the face of nothing in particular. But even though this is the case, its sense of being something which 'assails' us is still present and, for Heidegger, there is an ultimate directedness to this 'indefiniteness'. In fact, anxiety is only non-referential in the sense that its source is the ultimate unknowability of our own death. As well as throwing us into the 'worldhood' of authentic *Dasein* and 'Being-with-others', anxiety thus also places us face to face with the contingency and finitude of our existence. This encounter makes palpable the lack of control and mastery that one has over the basis of one's life: 'the "nothing" with which anxiety brings us face to face, unveils the nullity by which *Dasein*, in its very *basis*, is defined' (*BT*, p. 356).

When reflecting on the implications of such existential anxiety Heidegger comes to a startling conclusion, arguing that 'anxiety individualizes *Dasein* and thus discloses it as "*solus ipse*". But this existential "solipsism" is so far from the displacement of putting an isolated subject-Thing into the innocuous emptiness of a worldless occurring, that in an extreme sense what it does is precisely bring *Dasein* face to face with its world as world, and thus bring it face to face with itself as Being-in-

the-world' (*BT*, p. 233). Heidegger therefore seems to end up in a position of solipsism rather than attempting to escape it as so many philosophers before him had tried. Yet, this is, of course, no ordinary solipsism and is, in fact, radically opposed to that of Marcel's with which this essay began. But could it be that a similar facing of 'nullity' is the ultimate way in which Proustian jealousy recovers Being-in-the-world? In his essay 'The Other's Other: Jealousy and Art in Proust', J. Hillis Miller argues that 'death is another name for the wholly other. The continuation after Albertine's death of Marcel's desire to know all her secrets exposes the identity of these secrets with death. It is as if she were dead already when she is still alive. It is as if Marcel, in his desire to know Albertine completely, were, even when she is still alive, desiring to know those unknowable secrets of the dead.'<sup>24</sup> Jealousy, like anxiety, is here directed towards death (as nothing) in such a way as to make plain the vulnerable, contingent and unchosen state from which the human stands against its world. This is, essentially, an action in which the Being-of-Others, and so by implication the Being of oneself as authentically a Being-with-Others, is grasped via a wholly negative acceptance of a nullity.

To return to the role of jealousy in epistemological matters makes this fact plain. For all its intent upon the attainment of knowledge, jealousy provides Marcel with very little in the way of concrete information or wisdom. Indeed, the disjunction between jealousy as an epistemological tool and the tangible knowledge which it actually facilitates is one of the key co-ordinates in Joshua Landy's recent reassessment of Proust's epistemology. For Landy, 'while jealousy may *look* like a quest for knowledge, and may perhaps incidentally *involve* a quest for knowledge, the one is not reducible to the other.'<sup>25</sup> In fact, Landy's central argument, advanced via a brilliant reading of the scene from *The Captive* in which Marcel refuses the opportunity to read Albertine's letters (concealed within her kimono) while she sleeps, is that what Marcel desperately wants is *not to know*. As the only thing which could end his jealous suspicions would be concrete proof of Albertine's infidelity (something which Marcel does not want to be confronted with) his endless pursuit of apparent truth

is merely a smokescreen for his will to continued ignorance. As Landy argues, ‘the point of all his (Marcel’s) surveillance is not to confirm his suspicions but to allay them with false evidence to the contrary, to provide a semblance of accuracy rather than the facts themselves, *to redouble his ignorance by making him forget that there is even anything left to know*’ (PF, p. 97). Not limited to the predicament of jealous lovers, for Landy this points towards one of the ways in which Proust’s novel (in particularly Nietzschean terms) is philosophically significant.

While Landy’s argument advances the insights of Bowie in a fascinating way, it still approaches the issue from a stage beyond its most elemental functioning. Marcel could indeed discover, definitively and once and for all, if Albertine has been unfaithful to him. But in a crucial sense, this would make little difference to the world of radical Otherness that jealousy has ushered him into. As Miller points out ‘the jealous lover wants to know not just what the beloved is doing but also what she or he is thinking or feeling, her or his most hidden thoughts and impulses [...] these things he can never know, and so his jealousy is forever unassuageable’ (OO, p. 122 & p. 138). The discovery that is made after all of Marcel’s various epistemological techniques is therefore less that of any tangible fact (or its avoidance) and more, as Deleuze puts it ‘the discovery of the unknowable world which represents the beloved’s own viewpoint’ (PS, p. 122).

In *The Fugitive*, Marcel comments that ‘it is one of the faculties of jealousy to reveal to us the extent to which the reality of external facts and the sentiments of the heart are an unknown element which lends itself to endless suppositions. We imagine that we know exactly what things are and what people think, for the simple reason that we do not care about them. But as soon as we have a desire to know, as the jealous man has, then it becomes a dizzy Kaleidoscope in which we can no longer distinguish anything (V, 593). Here we see the key elements of the argument set out above articulated in miniature. For Marcel – and indeed, if we follow Heidegger, for everyone – normal everyday existence implies a solipsism in which others are reduced to functions of one’s own mind.

Jealousy, as disclosive mood, works to clear the obstacles that create this sense and leave the ground open for an encounter with authentic *Dasein*. But what this gives Marcel cannot be measured by a gain in knowledge. His jealousy motivates ‘endless suppositions’ precisely because the goal of tangible knowledge is never reached. What it does give Marcel, though, is a way out of the dulling world of habit in which he normally resides. Emmanuel Levinas sums it up nicely when he argues that ‘to know what Albertine does, what Albertine sees, who sees Albertine, is of no interest in itself as a form of knowledge, but is infinitely exciting because of its fundamental strangeness in Albertine, this strangeness which mocks knowledge.’<sup>26</sup> Strangeness destroys habit and, in its interminable nullity, continually fuels the jealous mood that is its partner. Heidegger writes that ‘it is precisely when we see the "world" unsteadily and fitfully in accordance with our moods, that the ready-to-hand shows itself in its specific worldhood, which is never the same from day to day’ (*BT*, p. 177). In jealousy, Marcel becomes attuned to the Otherness of Albertine and to the ‘dizzy Kaleidoscope’ of a Being-in-the-World which will not submit solely to his will. In encountering the Otherness of the world, he thus becomes its willing captive.

---

<sup>1</sup> Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, trans. Terence Kilmartin and C. K. Scott Moncrieff (London: Vintage, 2002); hereafter abbreviated by volume number and page.

<sup>2</sup> Combining Proust and Heidegger is unusual, though not without precedent. Richard Rorty has previously utilised a comparison of the two in the service of an argument about ‘ironist theory’ in his 1989 study, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> In the original French, ‘story about Swann’ reads ‘*récit relatif à Swann*’. *Récit* usually denotes a fictional narrative, while ‘relative to’ as opposed to ‘about’ undermines, with even greater emphasis than the English translation, the idea of Marcel’s written version being an objective historical record of events. Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu* Folio Classique (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1988) V, 352.

<sup>4</sup> Vladimir Nabokov, *Lectures on Literature* (London: Picador, 1983), p. 239.

- 
- <sup>5</sup> Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 121.
- <sup>6</sup> Paul De Man, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 60.
- <sup>7</sup> René Girard, *Deceit, Desire and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), p. 33.
- <sup>8</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs* (New York: George Braziller, 1972), p. 6; hereafter abbreviated *PS*.
- <sup>9</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), p. 164; hereafter abbreviate *BT*.
- <sup>10</sup> Stephen Mulhall, *Heidegger and Being and Time* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 74; hereafter abbreviated *HBT*.
- <sup>11</sup> Stendhal. *Love*, trans. Gilbert and Suzanne Sale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), p. 59.
- <sup>12</sup> Leo Bersani, *Marcel Proust: The Fictions of Life and of Art* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 103.
- <sup>13</sup> Leo Bersani, *The Culture of Redemption* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 8.
- <sup>14</sup> I have argued this point extensively elsewhere. See Rex Ferguson, *Criminal Law and the Modernist Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
- <sup>15</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Infancy and History: Essays on the Destruction of Experience* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 42.
- <sup>16</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975 – 1995* (New York: Semiotexte, 2006), pp. 30-31.
- <sup>17</sup> Samuel Beckett, *Proust* (London: John Calder, 1965), p. 33; hereafter abbreviated *P*.
- <sup>18</sup> Malcolm Bowie, *Freud, Proust, Lacan: Theory as Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 49; hereafter abbreviated *FPL*.
- <sup>19</sup> Fredrick A. Olafson, *Heidegger and the Philosophy of Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 154.
- <sup>20</sup> Charles B. Guignon, *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 6.
- <sup>21</sup> Harrison Hall, “Intentionality and World: Division I of Being and Time”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles B. Guignon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 124; hereafter abbreviated *IW*.



---

<sup>22</sup> Georges Poulet, *Studies in Human Time* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1956), p. 302.

<sup>23</sup> For a fascinating account of *stimmung* and its latent potential in literary texts see Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's *Atmosphere, Mood, Stimmung: On a Hidden Potential in Literature*, trans. Erik Butler (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).

<sup>24</sup> J. Hillis Miller, "The Other's Other: Jealousy and Art in Proust", *Qui Parle* 9.1 (1995), p. 125; hereafter abbreviated *OO*.

<sup>25</sup> Joshua Landy, *Philosophy as Fiction: Self, Deception, and Knowledge in Proust* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 88; hereafter abbreviated *PF*.

<sup>26</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, "The Other in Proust." *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Sean Hand (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 163.